**MEDITERRANEAN HUNTING & CONSERVATION**

**LEADERS MEET IN CYPRUS**

**21 January 2012, Larnaca** - Hosted by the Cyprus Federation for Hunting & Wildlife Conservation, the first FACE-Mediterranean Meeting of 2012 covered a full agenda including national reports, expert insights from The Cyprus Game Fund, the European Institute for Migratory Birds of the Western Palearctic (OMPO), the European Association of Traditional Hunts (AECT) as well as FACE (Europe).

20 experts gathered for the intensive meeting, including representatives from 5 FACE-MED countries: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Malta who exchanged information and updates on their local and national affairs.

Antonis Kakoullis, President of the Cyprus Federation for Hunting & Wildlife Conservation welcomed the participants and with his excellent team as well as key partner, The Cyprus Game Fund, set the tone for a purposeful meeting. Indeed, a good overview of hunting in Cyprus was provided, with eye-opening presentations on the release of game birds in Cyprus as well as the effects of rapid development on the island – with 6000km of road in 1980 doubling in 20 years.

These presentations created much discussion on the plight of habitat loss in the Mediterranean, leading the participants to spontaneously and sincerely prepare a Declaration (see annex) addressing the extreme habitat disturbance and fragmentation in the region.

FACE Vice-President Giovanni Bana gave a thorough overview of FACE-MED’s activities, paying particular attention to the focused engagement with the Nordic Hunters. Nicolas Papadodimas, FACE Vice-President and President of the Hellenic Hunters’ Confederation warned the participants against the growing importance of the animal welfare discourse and its potential impact on hunting if not addressed correctly.

Technical knowledge on traditional hunting methods & the EU Birds Directive was shared by Massimo Marracci, Secretary General of the European Association of Traditional Hunts (AECT) whilst Micali Giuseppe of the European Foundation *Il Nibbio* (FEIN) presented findings from an in-depth study on Song Thrush Wings. FACE’s Secretary General Yves Lecocq presented a pertinent view of the Council of Europe’s recent work around illegal bird killing and how it relates to hunters and FACE-MED Members.

The Cyprus Federation for Hunting & Wildlife Conservation generously provided a traditional welcome dinner for the participants, and closed the event with a spectacular official dinner and awards ceremony, attended by various high-level guests including the Minister of the Interior Neocles Silikiotis who was very supportive of the meeting, the Member of European Parliament for Cyprus Kyriacos Triantaphyllides, the Mayors of both Larnaca and Strovolos Town and the previous Presidents of the Cyprus Game Fund. The Cyprus Game Fund Director, Pantelis Hadjigerou noted their collective appreciation of the advice garnered from FACE (Europe) at the time of Cyprus’ EU accession.

FACE-MED Members return to their respective countries with a refreshed outlook on the future of hunting in the Mediterranean, looking forwards to both their next gathering with the Nordic Hunters in the south of France in June and of course the upcoming Cypriot EU Presidency, set for July-December this year.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION & PHOTOS, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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